

To Whom It May Concern:

To begin, it is necessary to know that the population of each state was recently enumerated through a mandated national census concluded late in 2020. The census reflects shifts in population that have occurred since the previous count in 2010 and ultimately will determine how many representatives will be allocated to each state in the U.S. House of Representatives. It is expected that decreases in the Illinois population will result in fewer representatives than the 18 individuals who now represent the state's interests in Washington, DC. Consequently new districts will be both geographically larger and more populous than previous ones. New boundaries will be drawn to reflect demographic changes; the critical issue for legislators or others responsible for creation of new districts is how these districts should be created. How can districts be created to equally represent all eligible voters within the state?

There is little disagreement that new congressional districts, state legislative districts and other necessary municipal districts should be created to be fair and equitable, ensuring that all people residing within a district are equally represented. Boundaries should not be drawn to either empower or disenfranchise members of political parties and should reflect the varied and diverse views of those residing within each district. Districts should not be created to protect incumbent representatives nor guarantee that historically dominant parties remain in control. While the interests of racial, ethnic, linguistic or other minorities residing within a district should be recognized, it is unfair to pack minority voters into single districts or split them into many districts to dilute their influence. However, the creation of crossover districts, coalition districts or influence districts to advance the interests of minority communities should also be discouraged regardless of the intent of these geographic maneuvers.

Legislative districts should make geographic sense. While districts should be of approximately equal population size, drawing boundaries that divide cities, counties and municipalities to further political interests does not make sense. There is no reason that a district should extend across 10 or more counties or that a single city should contain parts of multiple, separate congressional districts, sometimes represented by individuals of different political parties. Although gerrymandered districts serve to preserve the status quo, such boundary manipulations serve to dilute the influence of individual voters within Illinois communities and may create gridlock that prevents needed legislation from moving forward. In addition, access to polling places may be compromised when voters are forced to travel long distances to reach their designated voting locations or cast their ballots in advance of Election Day.

Although the redistricting process will not begin until final census results are available, these factors should be considered when creating new legislative districts within the State of Illinois.

(Dr.) Ellen D. Weinstein

400 Joseph Court

Oswego, IL 60543-7315

Telephone: (630) 292-7215

email: nlpsych@ameritech.net